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Smiddy  
LEARNING RESOURCE  
CENTER  
Harris Memorial Library  
Academic Resource Center  
General Office  
Day & Evening Study  
College of Education Learning Lab  
Business Services Student Work



















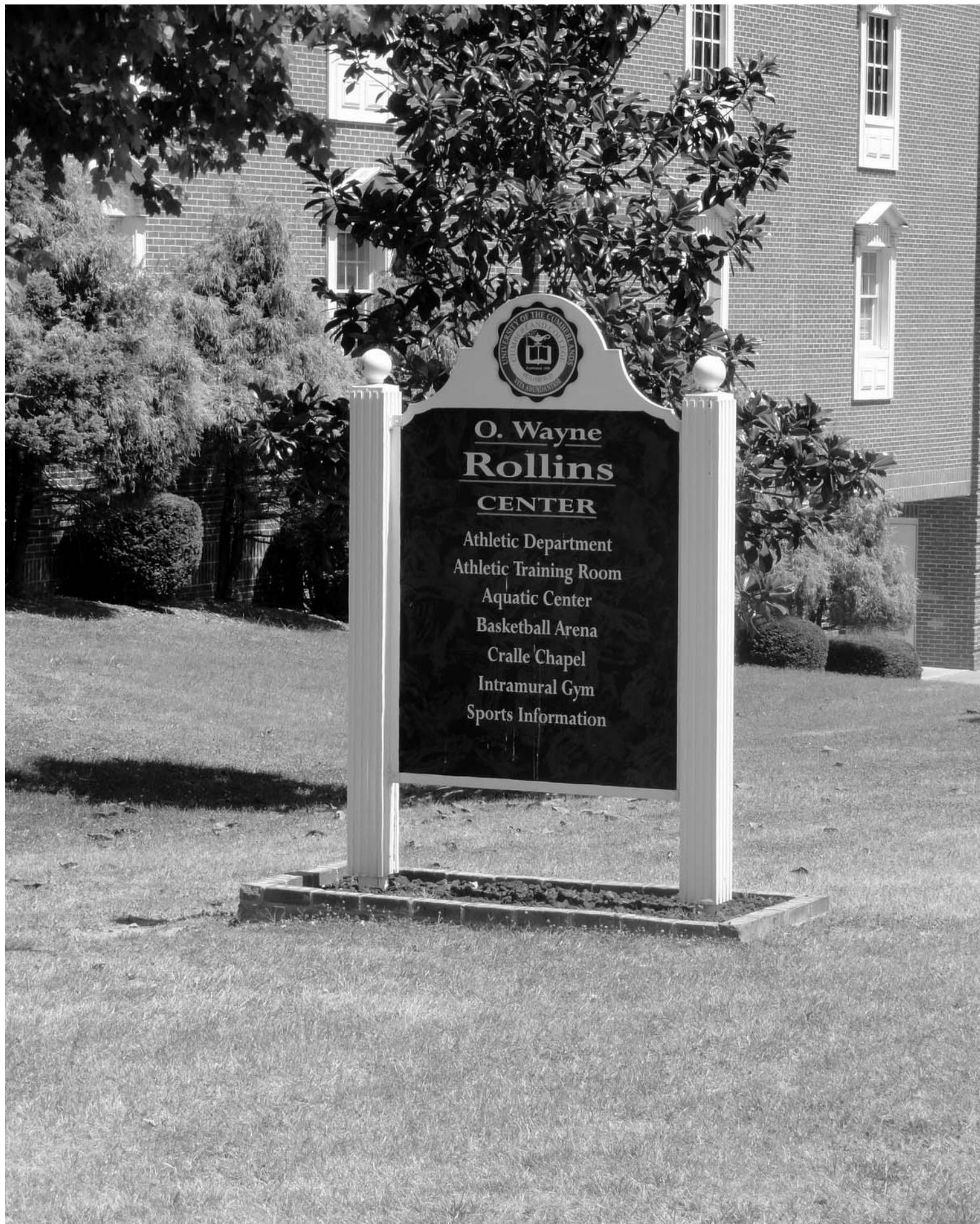












O. Wayne  
**Rollins**  
CENTER

Athletic Department  
Athletic Training Room  
Aquatic Center  
Basketball Arena  
Cralle Chapel  
Intramural Gym  
Sports Information

































































# Big South Fork Scenic Railway

## OPERATING SCHEDULE

APRIL THROUGH NOVEMBER

### APRIL

Thur. & Fri.	11:00 a.m.
Sat.	11:00 a.m. & 2:30 p.m.

### MAY THROUGH SEPTEMBER

Wed., Thur. & Fri.	11:00 a.m.
Sat.	11:00 a.m. & 2:30 p.m.
Sun.	12:30 p.m.

### MEMORIAL & LABOR DAY WEEKENDS

Sat. & Sun.	11:00 a.m. & 2:30 p.m.
Mon.	11:00 a.m.

### OCTOBER

Tues., Wed., Thur. & Fri.	11:00 a.m.
Sat.	11:00 a.m. & 2:30 p.m.
Sun.	12:30 p.m.

### NOVEMBER

Thur. & Fri.	1:00 p.m.
Sat.	1:00 p.m.

## Special Events

### OCTOBER

Haunted Hollow Express - Last three Fri. & Sat. 7:30 p.m.  
Trick or Treat Train for Tots - Sat. October 22 at 6:00 p.m.

### DECEMBER

Santa Express - First three Sat. at 11:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m.

## TICKET OFFICE

OPEN 1 HOUR BEFORE TRAIN DEPARTS

TICKETS SOLD FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE

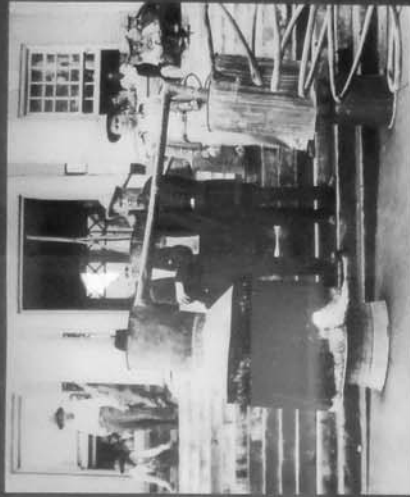
[www.bsfsry.com](http://www.bsfsry.com)

606-376-5330





Upper Marsh Creek School children waving flags on the Fourth of July. Schools have always been a unifying element for communities.



The good and the bad. Left, church members are baptised in Lower Marsh Creek in 1925. Many communities were formed around rural churches. Above, Sheriff Tommy Roundtree and deputies pose on the courthouse steps with a captured still.



The Kentucky and Tennessee Railroad employees at their first annual picnic in 1932. There was swimming, potato races, lots to eat and, always, baseball. The K&T picnic, held on the fourth of July, later evolved into county-wide Independence Day celebrations.



ural families in McCreary County's early s, community life was an important outlet families who spent much of their time on ated family farms. Churches and schools, addition to their religious and educational nctions, were also important social centers. ccasional trips into town provided a chance o not only stock up on needed items and take care of business, but also provided an opportunity to visit with neighbors and friends.

With the rise of the coal and logging industries, many families began to live in more densely populated coal or timber camps, or in the county's growing towns. These families welcomed an opportunity to meet and greet their neighbors. As a result large scale community and company sponsored social events began to take place.



Baseball was once a major form of entertainment in the county. Every mining camp and every town had a team.



1937 Carnival in Stearns. Annual carnivals are still a popular place for McCreary Countians to come together.



# McCreary County FOLKLIFE

## Changing Times, Lasting Traditions



Above, left, community members in a cross-cultural meal competition in celebration of McCreary's historic lumber industry during McCreary Fest. Above, center and right, community members at McCreary Fest.



Left, Davidson Day is a big social event in McCreary County with members showcasing their quilts in square dance competitions. Below, right, members enjoy this momentous occasion.

Family is one important group to which we all belong. Community is another. Just as our families develop traditional ways of celebrating the holidays and marking special events, so do our communities.

For many McCreary Countians, community is an extension of the family bond. Many extended families are connected, if not by blood and marriage, then by long time proximity. Coming together for community

# FOLKLIFE

Changing Times, Lasting Traditions

PIE SUPPER  
BALD KNOB  
SCHOOL  
OCTOBER 3, AT 6 PM.  
EVERYONE WELCOME

WINTER & SUMMER  
JOURNALS  
Integration Day  
STEARN'S  
JULY 4 1928









Stearns Coal & Lumber Co.  
Employee Photos



Copies of Photos  
Available for Purchase  
At McCreary Co. Museum

Stearns Coal & Lumber Co.  
Employee Photos



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Stearns Coal & Lumber Co.  
Employee Photos



Copies of Photos  
Available for Purchase  
At McCrory Co. Museum





Copies of Photo

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lable for Purchase  
Creary Co. Museum













**McCreary County**

# Centennial Celebration

## McCreary County Coal Camps

Coal mining began in McCreary County in the late 1800s, spurred on by the development of the railroad. The local miners contributed greatly to building America's much as a growing nation.



Workers in a coal mine.



Workers in a coal mine.

Coal camps were self-sufficient communities that included a store, a church, boarding house, doctor's office and cemetery. Hundreds of families lived nearby.



Workers in a coal mine.

**Remnants of coal camps** - Historic Park Station and Abertown are now part of the Daniel Boone National Forest.



Workers in a coal mine.



Workers in a coal mine.



Workers in a coal mine.



Workers in a coal mine.



Workers in a coal mine.



Workers in a coal mine.



Workers in a coal mine.



Workers in a coal mine.



Workers in a coal mine.

## Sharing the history and progress of our community

Since 1912, the USGS Forest Service has been a part of McCreary County's history. First called the Cumberland National Forest, the forest was renamed in the United States National Forest in 1908.

### Providing Scenic Places

Today, nearly 150,000 acres of forested land are in McCreary County. These lands are managed to provide a sustainable supply of forest resources while maintaining scenic and recreational values.

### Protecting Our Cultural Heritage

McCreary County is home to many historic sites and landmarks. These sites are protected and preserved for future generations.

### Preserving Our Natural Resources

McCreary County is home to many natural resources, including wildlife and plants. These resources are protected and preserved for future generations.

### Providing Economic Opportunities

McCreary County is home to many economic opportunities, including tourism and recreation. These opportunities are protected and preserved for future generations.

### Providing Educational Opportunities

McCreary County is home to many educational opportunities, including schools and libraries. These opportunities are protected and preserved for future generations.

### Providing Healthcare Opportunities

McCreary County is home to many healthcare opportunities, including hospitals and clinics. These opportunities are protected and preserved for future generations.

### Providing Social Opportunities

McCreary County is home to many social opportunities, including parks and recreation areas. These opportunities are protected and preserved for future generations.

### Providing Transportation Opportunities

McCreary County is home to many transportation opportunities, including roads and bridges. These opportunities are protected and preserved for future generations.

### Providing Housing Opportunities

McCreary County is home to many housing opportunities, including homes and apartments. These opportunities are protected and preserved for future generations.

### Providing Employment Opportunities

McCreary County is home to many employment opportunities, including jobs and careers. These opportunities are protected and preserved for future generations.

### Providing Retirement Opportunities

McCreary County is home to many retirement opportunities, including pensions and annuities. These opportunities are protected and preserved for future generations.

### Providing Insurance Opportunities

McCreary County is home to many insurance opportunities, including life and health insurance. These opportunities are protected and preserved for future generations.

### Providing Legal Opportunities

McCreary County is home to many legal opportunities, including lawyers and judges. These opportunities are protected and preserved for future generations.

### Providing Financial Opportunities

McCreary County is home to many financial opportunities, including banks and investment firms. These opportunities are protected and preserved for future generations.

### Providing Entertainment Opportunities

McCreary County is home to many entertainment opportunities, including theaters and concert venues. These opportunities are protected and preserved for future generations.

### Providing Religious Opportunities

McCreary County is home to many religious opportunities, including churches and synagogues. These opportunities are protected and preserved for future generations.

### Providing Community Opportunities

McCreary County is home to many community opportunities, including neighborhood associations and community centers. These opportunities are protected and preserved for future generations.



# Civilian Conservation Corps Camps



Bridge construction at Bell Farm CCC Camp F-14 in 1939.  
Photo from National Archives.



Telephone line crew, CCC Camp F-12. Photo from Bell Farm Pictorial Review.



Stearns CCC Camp F-12. Photo from Vern Accord.

During the Great Depression, the Civilian Conservation Corps provided employment for thousands of young men throughout the country. From 1933 to 1942, under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, the CCC constructed roads, bridges and other facilities that we continue to enjoy today.

Out of 85 CCC camps once located in Kentucky, four were in McCreary County: Stearns F-12, Stearns P-65, Bell Farm F-14 and



were in McCreary County:  
 Stearns F-12, Stearns P-65,  
 Bell Farm F-14 and  
 Greenwood F-6. Three of  
 these historic sites now occur  
 on national forest lands.



Bell Farm CCC Camp F-14 enrollees. Photo from Bell Farm Pictorial Review.



Greenwood CCC Camp F-6 in 1934. Photo from Vern Accord.



Stearns CCC Camp F-12 work crew. Photo from National Archives.



Buck Knob Lookout Tower, 1930.



Stearns CCC Camp F-12 Photo from Vern Accord.



CCC Camp F-6 Photo from National Archives.



Bell Farm CCC Camp F-14 in 1936. Photo from National Archives.



Greenwood CCC Camp F-6, 1935. Left to right: Charles Blackwelder, Roy Thompson, George Freeman. Photo from Vern Accord.



# McCreary County FOLKLIFE

Changing Times, Lasting Traditions



The process of skinning a hog or one of the other animals was a laborious undertaking requiring a lot of work. Skinning and butchering animals for personal consumption was once a common practice.

Canning, Churning, Molasses making, Egg gathering, Corn grinding, Butchering. These are just a few of the skills that once took up a significant part of the daily lives of previous generations of McCreary Countians. Producing and preparing food was difficult, time consuming, and never-ending. Today, convenient, nutritious—and some not so nutritious—foods are often just a short car ride away.

Many rural families had no choice but to be self-sufficient, and food preparation was hard work that involved the entire family. Malnutrition and poor health were not uncommon as families struggled to provide for themselves.

Today, many of us only have time to prepare foods "the old way" on special occasions. And yet, in an age of convenience, we still take time to occasionally follow older traditions. Maybe this is just nostalgia—or, perhaps it's a way to honor the hard work and self-reliance of those who came before us.



While McCreary County has relied mostly on coal and timber for employment, there have always been a few working farms.



In addition to small gardens, many families raised chickens as a source of fresh eggs and meat before grocery stores allowed frozen chickens to be sold.



The Quaker Oats Mill and other small-scale mills were common in the area before the First World War. The mill was used to grind grain into flour.



Milk and Coffee Cans were used to store milk in the past.



Without Red Mill, production of flour was slow. Though personal gardens were common, grainy staples were what fed the families and rising consumption.



Edison's history is important. The man who invented the light bulb and many other things was born in the area. The area was made all due to Edison's inventions.

foodways  
Yesterday

McCreary County  
FOLKLIFE





# McCreary County FOLKLIFE

Changing Times, Lasting Traditions



Eva Khardt, below, like many McCreary Countians, cans a wide variety of vegetables grown in her garden. Eva and her sisters learned the art of canning from their mother when they were young.

Food is such a common part of our daily life that it is easy to overlook its significance. The special foods we eat on holidays and at family celebrations are one kind of tradition. But so are the common, everyday foods that we seldom think about. Often, these foods can be just as deeply embedded in tradition and history as our "special" foods—and they can be a distinctive part of our regional heritage. Beans and cornbread, once a staple meal in mining camps and on family farms, continue to be, for many McCreary Countians, both a common meal and a regional dish. Chicken and dumplings is also an important dish for many families in our area, often served at family gatherings.

Foods themselves may be considered traditional, but so are the practices that go along with the raising, gathering, and preparation of food. Modern grocery stores and conveniences offer a whole new range of foods. And yet many of us continue some of these traditional food practices. Maybe we raise a garden, or can, freeze, or dry our produce. Others hunt, or gather traditional foodstuffs from the woods. And many have special ways of preparing food for holidays and



David Gibson, 17, with his first gun. Although hunting for food is no longer necessary, the tradition lives on today and is very popular in this county.

Don Anderson's "Honey House" in Starks, where he preserves the honey he collects from his 100 hives.

continue to be, for many McCreary Countians, both a common meal and a regional dish. Chicken and dumplings is also an important dish for many families in our area, often served at family gatherings.

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Think about the food traditions in your life. Is there a special food that the holidays just wouldn't be the same without? What new foods have become a part of your family's diet over the past few years? Do certain "comfort" foods always remind you of home?



Ida Glaze with her goats. Ida makes goat cheese for friends and neighbors. Although slaughtering farm animals for personal use was once common, it is not considered practical today, and few families do so. Cattle, hogs, chickens, turkeys, and recently more exotic animals such as ostriches, rhinos and emus are raised for commercial sale by many farming families in McCreary County.



Clyde Gibson, 12, with his first gun. Although hunting for food is no longer necessary, the tradition lives on today and is very popular in the county.

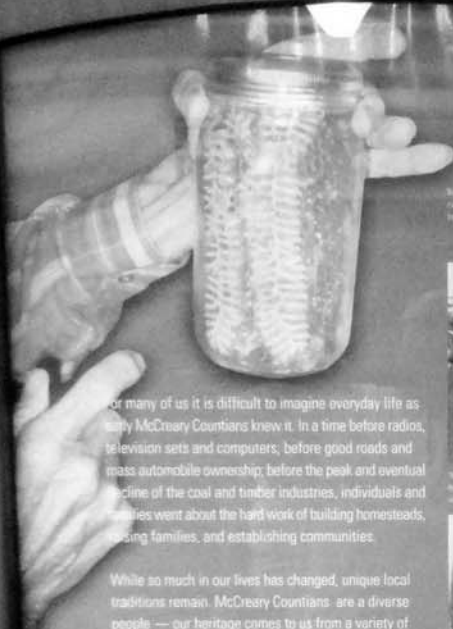


Bert Anderson's "Honey House" in Sirock, where he prepares the honey he collects from his 100 bee hives.

foodways  
Today

# McCreary County FOLKLIFE

Changing Times, Lasting Traditions



The McCreary County Folk Museum, with Park, McCreary County, Ky.

For many of us it is difficult to imagine everyday life as early McCreary Countians knew it. In a time before radios, television sets and computers; before good roads and mass automobile ownership; before the peak and eventual decline of the coal and timber industries, individuals and families went about the hard work of building homesteads, raising families, and establishing communities.

While so much in our lives has changed, unique local traditions remain. McCreary Countians are a diverse people — our heritage comes to us from a variety of European and Native American bloodlines and cultures. Close family ties and a love of home are sources of strength, and are traditions that help to foster a deep-rooted sense of place.

Though we may think "tradition" means "it's always been done that way," in fact, tradition is always changing. Each generation shapes the traditions that it passes on. Though some important elements remain the same, the traditions we know differ from those of our grandparents. Our children's sense of tradition will be different yet.

A rich local folklife also sets us apart. Folklife consists of arts, crafts, beliefs, customs, and other cultural expressions that are passed down informally and that are a part of all of our lives. Over time, many of these expressions become traditions, helping to define who we are and where we come from.

Looking at our folklife of yesterday and today, we see that the traditions that last are the ones that still have meaning in people's lives. Often, these traditions are meaningful because they are shared.

All around our county, there are individuals actively sharing and passing on the traditions that are important to them. Perhaps it is a story, or a particular craft, or a special food. Maybe it's an annual family gathering, or a community event, or a special song learned at church. This exhibit highlights just a few of the individuals and traditions that make up our diverse community.



McCreary County's folk art, such as the McCreary County Folk Museum, with Park, McCreary County, Ky.



McCreary County's folk art, such as the McCreary County Folk Museum, with Park, McCreary County, Ky.



McCreary County's folk art, such as the McCreary County Folk Museum, with Park, McCreary County, Ky.

traditions  
Yesterday  
& Today



to keep them ties strong.



Teachers and students pose for a photograph at the Silerville School in 1918.

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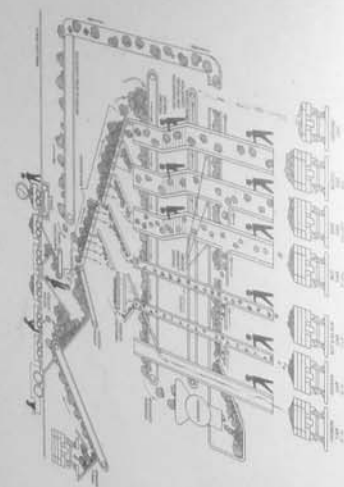








# TIPPLE OPERATION



The Blue Heron Tipple was modified and mechanized for the third operation of the Blue Heron Company in having not a quarter of a million dollars at the "New #16 Mine, Blue Heron, Kentucky."

A coal tippie separated the various sizes of coal coming from the mine. The coal was dumped into a hopper leading to a conveyor belt called an "apron feeder." Smaller-sized coal traveled on to a series of screens. The coal which passed through the screens down through the screens, to coal freight cars below. Coal too large to be used immediately or commercially or to fit through one of the screens, was sent back to the top of the tippie and would travel over separate screens and on to the coal cars.

Each screen selected different size coal chunks, destined for different uses. Each of these sizes had a different name.



Main Hopper and apron feeder.

Coal too small to fit in a screen was called "screenings" and was used for industrial uses. It commanded a small price.

Rock and refuse was picked and separated out too, and being high in sulphur and impurities, could only be dumped as mine tailings or used as "ballast," or support base for pads and roads.

The Blue Heron Tipple served mine and coal screens, separate and had over 400 tons of coal on hand.

In those days, coal inspection was still expected to take place at the mine face, and random coal carloads were taken for inspection. The Blue Heron Tipple also had a smaller hopper to receive sample coal and deliver it to a conveyor inspection table where workers sorted and inspected the coal as an additional check. That quality coal would reach the market from the Blue Heron Tipple.

Other "picking tables" allowed workers to check the coal as it moved from shaker and screen to loading bins.



Loading bins coal under tippie with loading bins.



Main coal shakers sort coal through holes of varying sizes.

Minerals in the mine coal chips collected, "muck train," keeping it from being delivered with the coal. This muck train consisted partially of rock and coal chips, but by the muck train, these could be recycled and used again, nearly getting for manufacturing the chips.

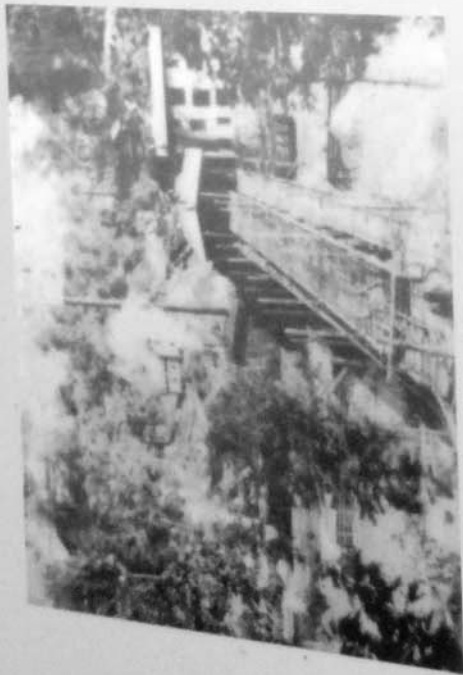
The diagram at left is a simplified schematic of the tippie's machinery and operation.



Coal Crusher

# T I P P L E S

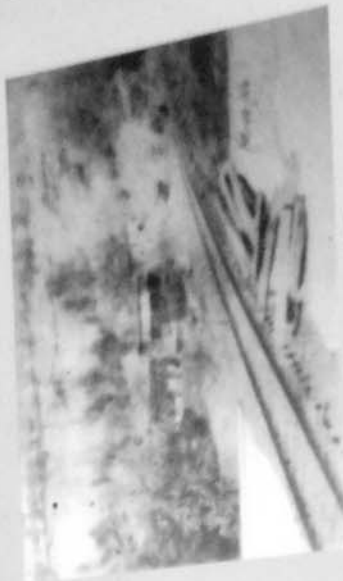
Most of the tippie pictures on this panel were owned and operated in this area by the Stearns Company at various times in its history.



Early coal tippie (location unknown)

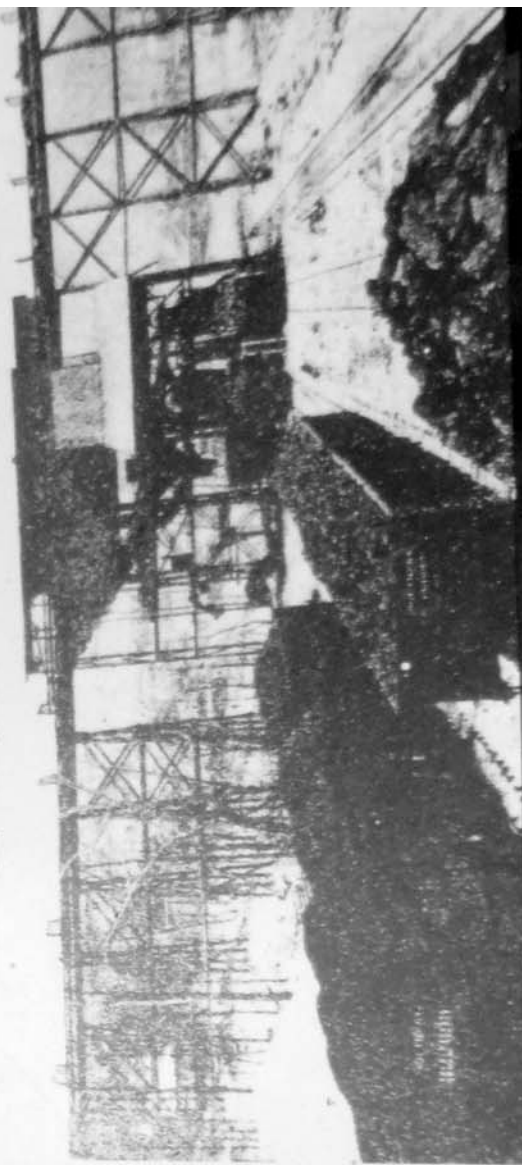


Yamacraw tippie



Mine No. 1 tippie at Barthell in 1903

Cooperative tippie ▼





# THE STEARNS COAL & LUMBER

1901:

Stearns' agent W.A. Kinne purchases 50,000 acres of regional timberland in "Big Survey."



Stearns' Land Agent W. A. Kinne.

1902:

Stearns' agent L.W. Bryant, the man and engineer, for interest in 40 acres in extreme southwest of Clay County, Kentucky.

Opening of Store 1, Stearns, Kentucky.



Store #1 in Stearns.

1903:

Joseph Butler becomes General Manager.

Original owners of Stearns Company were: J.S. Stearns, president

W.T. Culver, vice president

R.L. Stearns, secretary-treasurer

Board members: J.E. Butler, Edward E. Barthell

Barthell Mine #1 is opened.

Kentucky and Tennessee Railway reaches Barthell; first load of coal, of 32,000 tons is shipped.



Robert L. Stearns was president from 1933 to 1939.



John E. Butler was president from 1939 to 1949.



Edward E. Barthell, an initial Stearns Company board member, held several different offices.

1905:

Barthell Mine #2 and Worley Mines #3 and #4 are opened.



Mines #3 and #4 at Worley.

1907:

Yamacraw Mine #19 opens with a concrete tippie, a store, schoolhouse and dwellings.

Completion of the concrete railroad bridge over the Big South Fork.



The Yamacraw community and the railroad bridge that crosses the Big South Fork River at that location.



Justus S. Stearns founded the Stearns Company in 1902 and was its president from 1902-1933.



Mine #1 at Barthell.

# PANY

## 1910:

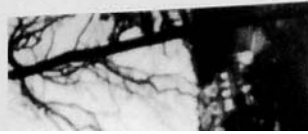
Stearns Lumber Co. becomes Stearns Coal and Lumber Company.

Bond issue floated to borrow for development of Stearns properties.

Yamacraw Mine #11 opens.

Additional land purchases bringing Stearns Company holdings to over 100,000 acres.

Stearns Company pays 1/3 taxes in county and supports directly or indirectly 75% of county population.



## 1916:

Stearns Co. own 78,000 acres outright and leases another 25,000 acres bringing potential reserves to 50,000,000 tons of coal and 380,000,000 board feet of lumber.

The sawmill is producing 70,000 feet of lumber a day.

Four mines producing 2800 tons of coal a day.

Stearns Co. has built 450 buildings including nine stores, offices, warehouses and barns.



A stump puller demonstration at the Stearns Farm.

McCreary County created.

First concrete structure tipping coal with shaker screens begins operation at Fidelity, formerly an independent mining company.

## 1912:



Stearns Company administration in 1916.



The Stearns Band.



Various Stearns Company offices and stores.

## 1920:

New high school built in Stearns for 400 students.

Stearns Company has five mines operating and three other coal companies shipping coal over the Kentucky and Tennessee Railway.

Other companies: Camargo Coal, Premier Coal and Wolf Creek, Paint Cliff Mining Company at Oz.

Fidelity, also called Fido, starts working with electrical equipment.



*Downtown Stearns in 1921.*

## 1923-1924:

Additional timber tracts purchased.

## 1926:

Saw mill opens again after being closed since 1909.

## 1929:

Stearns has 2,000 employees, and is producing 1,000,000 tons of coal annually.

The big flood washes houses into Yamacraw Bridge.

Stearns builds a 3,200-foot tunnel through the mountain at Ice Camp Branch.

## 1933:

Production in coal drops 20%. Robert Lyons Stearns, Sr. takes over Stearns Companies, Justus S. Stearns dies.



*The Stearns Company administration in 1933.*

## 1937:

Depression at height. Timberlands near depletion. Stearns Companies sells 47,000 acres to U.S. Government for Cumberland National Forest.

J. E. Butler develops Blue Heron. Building of Blue Heron Tipple.



*Promotional postcard for the "new" Blue Heron Tipple in 1938.*



1939:

Butler becomes president of Stearns Company. World War II coal industry boom gives company new energy.

1949:

Robert L. Stearns, Jr. becomes president of company.

Loss of railroad market due to conversion to diesel fuel. Loss of domestic heating market due to massive conversion to electricity, oil and natural gas.



Robert L. Stearns Jr. was president of the Stearns Company from 1949 to 1962.

1958:

Frank Thomas becomes General Manager of Stearns Company.



Frank Thomas was president of the Stearns Company from 1962 to 1976 and 1978 to 1987.

1962:

Blue Heron closes.



The Blue Heron tippie in 1972, ten years after it closed down.

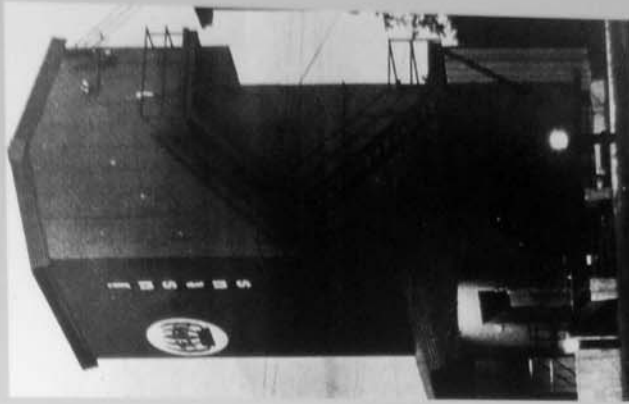
1963-1967:

Sawmill burns; state bank at Stearns is dissolved. Power, light, telephone and water systems are taken over by private and pub-



1968:

Revitalization of Stearns Company with the opening of Justus Mine.



The Stearns Company Justus Mine

1975:

Sale of Justus Mine to Blue Diamond Coal Company of Knoxville, Tennessee.

1979:

Sale of over 43,000 acres to U.S. Government for the Big South Fork



# ORAL HISTORY

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Searching the public and published record for the history, lifestyles and attitudes of miners and their families at Blue Heron and other Stearns Camps yields little result.

It is typical of the history we study in schools that governments' "great" events and powerful men hold center stage. Dates of wars and elections take precedence over understanding a way of life that may pass into time unrecorded.

Oral history - in this case, the collection of peoples memories in their homes, churches, back yards and country stores - has been the main source of information for what you will read, see, and hear as you enter each open structure here at Blue Heron.

Over 40 people who taught, lived, mined, preached and visited among the Stearns camps gave generously of their time, their recollections, their attitudes and reflections so that others might know more of a way of life they shared.

The way of life of the mining camp in this century in this area of Kentucky is central to understanding economy, values, and the changes in essential characteristics of rural Kentucky society.

The underpinnings of great events are driven by the folk who live and work in remote areas of America. In turn, their lives are dramatically changed by national events and major shifts in economic activity.

Oral history records regional attitudes and circumstances that remain hidden from scholars depending only on the written record.

The history of Blue Heron, its people, work in the mines, family and communal life, can only be recorded through the oral recollections of those who were a part of camp life here. There is no public written record of their lives and time.

It is these people we thank, and all who come here will remember both concept and realization of this center.

A special thanks belongs to Dr. William Berge, formerly professor of Oral History at Eastern Kentucky University, who collected the memories of most of the people whose voices you will hear. From 1978 to 1986, he visited those who know about Blue Heron and became a familiar face to people who remembered life in the coal camps.





# B L U E H E R O N C O A L

Blue Heron Camp came late to the Stearns Company operations. Settlement in this area began as a result of new mines on both sides of the river, but centered around the building of the new all-metal tipples and the tram bridge across the Big South Fork in 1937.

When the trouble began, there were no houses at all, and Luther Ledbetter, who

The mine eventually went to a low yield of #2 coal, higher in sulphur content. As time went on, labor an

mining expense made it unprofitable to mine what little was left of salable coal. ing Can

Three or four houses were brought on flatcars as yet built until twenty-one or twenty-two fami-

The men at Blue Heron

Like most camps, Blue Heron

grade. After that, Blue Heron wanted further education

The men at Blue Heron









































